

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
March 23, 2010**

Voting Members Present

Joe Dixon	GEICO
William P. Farley (Vice-Chair)	Town of Somerset
Kerri Gates	The JBG Companies
Tiffany Gee	Chevy Chase Land Company
David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Leonard Grant	Friendship Heights Village Council
Bill McCloskey	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
David Torchinsky	Law Offices of Binstock, Torchinsky and Associates

Non-Voting Members Present

Sandra L. Brecher	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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TMD Staff Present

Absent

Nakengi Byrd	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Jim Carlson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Marc Esposito	Bloomingtondale's
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Capt. Russell Hamill	Montgomery County Police
Kenneth Hartman	B-CC Services Center
Christine McGrew	M-NCPPC
Christine Norris	Wisconsin Place
Robert Schwarzbart (Chair)	Friendship Heights Village Council
Sheila Wilson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Guests

Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
Kacie Levy	Rosborough Communications on behalf of MTA/Purple Line

Abbreviations Used Herein Include:

BRT = Bus Rapid Transit
CSS = Commuter Services Section
DDOT = DC Dept. of Transportation
FEIS = Final Environmental Impact Statement
MTA = Maryland Transit Administration
PLD = Parking Lot District
TMP = Traffic Mitigation Plan
WMATA = Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Item 1, 2 – Introductions/Approval of Minutes: Members introduced themselves and approved the February meeting minutes.

Item 3 – Chair’s Comments: Vice-Chair **Bill Farley** announced that he will be filling in for Chair **Robert Schwarzbart**, who was unable to attend the meeting. **Mr. Farley** asked if any members wanted to add items to the agenda.

Mr. McCloskey inquired about the letter the Committee sent to Washington, D.C. regarding the traffic light at GEICO and Western. **Ms. Brecher** explained she did not have an update from **Jim Carlson**, who was not in attendance due to training. **Mr. McCloskey** explained that he felt as though the Committee was being ignored and suggested that the County Executive write to the D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT) urging a reply. **Ms. Brecher** said that DDOT has taken action regarding the Jennifer and Western lane shift by installing signs and are going to be re-striping.

Mr. Farley asked if the Committee read the email regarding the installation of the pedestrian countdown signals at Wisconsin Avenue / Wisconsin Circle / Willard Avenue. **Ms. Brecher** distributed a copy of the email.

Item 4 – Purple Line Presentation Q& A: **Kacie Levy**, Public Relations Coordinator from Rosborough Communications, gave an update on the Purple Line. She explained her role with the Purple Line deals with public involvement such as public meetings. The more technical aspects of the project are not in her area of specialty, so she would refer those inquiries to the engineering team.

Rosborough is a consulting firm which is subcontracted under the engineering firms awarded contracts from the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) for Purple Line construction. Rosborough acts as a liaison between the public and the engineering contractors to facilitate public information regarding the Purple Line project study.

The Purple Line is a project of the MTA. When completed, it will be a 16-mile Light Rail line connecting the Bethesda Metro Station with the New Carrollton Metro Station. The Purple Line system will be inside the beltway connecting the activity areas of Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, Takoma/Langley Park and New Carrollton. The Purple Line will also connect Metro Red, Orange and Green rail lines, three MARC commuter rail lines, Amtrak and local bus services.

In August 2009 **Governor Martin O’Malley** selected the route, stations and transit mode for the Purple Line Project. The vehicles chosen for the light rail system are modeled after those in the cities of Houston and Charlotte because of their more modern design. The tracks are embedded in the street, allowing for easier crossing by vehicles. Bus stops will have shelters, ticket vending, schedule placement and bike racks, among other amenities.

Light rail was selected as the transit mode due to several factors:

- Light Rail is expected to have higher ridership than Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).
- It will be designed to serve a large capacity of riders.
- It promotes economic development and revitalization.
- Both the Montgomery County and Prince Georges County Planning Boards support the project.
- Three thousand community comments have been received, and it has local support.
- It is consistent with the County’s Master Plan.

In response to **Ms. Brecher's** inquiry regarding how community comments were analyzed, **Ms. Levy** said all the comments were read and viewed and responses will be provided after the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is published at the end of preliminary engineering. On the Rosborough website are comment summaries broken down by categories and numbers. Most of the comments were supportive of Light Rail vs. BRT. Some concerns dealt with traffic impacts and the effect on the Georgetown Branch Trail.

Ms. Levy provided additional information about the Purple Line project:

- 21 station stops
- 56 minute travel time from Bethesda to New Carrollton
- Supports Transit Oriented Development
- Project will transport 65,000 riders, removing 19,000 cars from County roads daily
- Greater Ridership will occur between Bethesda and Silver Spring
- Project cost is \$1.5-1.7 Billion
- Meets Federal guidelines for cost effectiveness

Cost effectiveness, **Ms. Levy** explained, is the Federal Government's formula for travel times vs. cost benefit to transit users. Currently, the cost effective program is structured as a pass/fail system; however, changes and other factors can be included, making meeting the requirements easier.

The Montgomery County Purple Line alignment starts at the Bethesda Metro station and travels to the Silver Spring Transit Center with stations at Connecticut Avenue, Lyttonsville and 16th Street. The line continues to the Takoma/Langley Transit Center with station stops at the Silver Spring Library, Dale Drive (under study), Manchester Road, Arliss Street, along University Blvd. via a dedicated center lane with a station stop at Gilbert and University. There will be designated crosswalks allowing riders access from the center lane of University Blvd.

Ms. Levy said that currently her team is working on Federal funding for the project, submitting paperwork for preliminary engineering. There are still refinements for some project areas and station design 'tweaking.' The tweaking process will involve individual community meetings at each of the stations, discussing station changes. There is ongoing coordination with the County and local jurisdictions, including the Georgetown Branch Right of Way and Capital Crescent Trail organizations seeking to maximizing the space between the trail and transit way.

Ms. Levy said that the Light Rail can operate in snow. An effective way to prevent snow accumulation is to run multiple trains providing cover from the snow.

It is still to be decided under whose jurisdiction the Purple Line project will operate, whether MTA, WMATA, or another arrangement.

Ms. Levy said her team is doing community outreach events, notifying the communities affected about project progress and updates, and also asking for help in determining outreach locations.

Mr. Farley suggested doing community outreach at the corner of Dorset and the Capital Crescent Trail because he knows there a lot of people in that area who are concerned about the environmental impact of the project.

Ms. Levy outlined the project schedule. Currently, her team is waiting to enter the preliminary engineering phase. A draft FEIS will take up to two years. The next phase, starting in spring of 2012, is

the request to enter the final project design phase. Construction could begin in 2013 or 2014 depending on funding availability. Construction completion is estimated to take three to four years.

Ms. Levy said that the project work groups involve a team effort, with MTA and engineering firms headed by Mike Madden, the Purple Line Project Manager.

She also reported that the cost for the Purple Line project would be shared between the State of Maryland and the Federal Government. In addition to the Purple Line there are two other projects under study by Maryland State, a Red Line commuter rail project in Baltimore and the Corridor Cities Transit Way in Montgomery County, located in the I-270 corridor.

Further information is provided in the project newsletter and on the website:
www.purplelinemaryland.com.

Item 5 – Commuter Services Updates: **Ms. Brecher** announced that the taxi sign in the window at the TRiPS Commuter Store, directing people to the taxi call button, has been removed over concerns that people will use the button even though the taxicabs are not using the taxi stand behind Giant.

Email alerts have been sent to employers notifying them that it is time to file their Traffic Mitigation Plan (TMP) Annual Reports. Employers with 25 or more employees have 30 days to submit reports detailing how traffic mitigation measures have been implemented in their companies over the past year.

The Annual Commuter Surveys have also been distributed. Businesses with fewer than 250 employees are selected to participate on a bi-yearly basis. Businesses with 250 or more employees are required to participate in the survey process each year because of their greater commute impact. Those businesses with 25 or more employees that have submitted TMPs are required by statute to make a “good faith effort” to obtain an 80 percent response rate.

Ms. Brecher discussed the County Executive’s proposed FY11 budget. The budget contained cuts to close a \$780 million budget gap. Contained in the plan are some cuts to Ride On bus service, including reduction of operating hours and frequency. Information on the FY11 budget is on the County’s Office of Management and Budget website.

There were also cuts to the Commuter Services Section (CSS), though there were no further cuts in staffing; however, the Fare Share and Super Fare Share programs will continue to be suspended under the FY11 budget. CSS is working with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to pilot a new employer pass program with SmarTrip cards using Parking Lot District (PLD) funds from Bethesda and Silver Spring. Currently, the technology is not available for SmarTrip to carry weekly or monthly passes on SmarTrip. However, the federal government granted a deadline extension to WMATA to carry separate parking and transit funds in separate purses on the card; this extension has allowed the agency time to work on perfecting the technology and will allow time to work on getting passes onto the SmarTrip card. CSS is working to develop a pilot employer pass program with employers in Silver Spring and Bethesda that would be implemented once the technology for passes on SmarTrip cards becomes available.

Ms. Brecher announced that County Government employees are to be furloughed for two weeks under the Executive’s proposed budget. Details are still being worked out as to how this will be implemented. There will also be approximately 400 positions eliminated under the County Executive’s FY11 budget recommendations.

Mr. Glass asked why parking revenue money could not go toward reducing the budget deficit. **Ms. Brecher** said that the surplus PLD funds could not legally be used to reduce the deficit. The PLD funds are under mandate to be used only within that PLD; however, there are provisions that allow for funding to be used for Commuter Services programs.

Ms. Brecher explained the County's Master Plan process. She said as master plans are developed, provisions for bicycle trails and other amenities are included. When proposed developments go through the development approval process, they are required to provide master planned facilities called for on that site. With regard to the bike trail that is part of the Wisconsin Place development, that site plan has a master planned bike trail that was required to be provided.

Ms. Brecher announced the Give and Ride program will be starting Sunday, April 11th and ending Saturday, April 17th. The Give and Ride program allows customers to give a non-perishable food item for Ride On bus fare. The TRiPS Commuter Stores will give courtesy cards for food donations, and donation boxes will be provided. The food and any monetary contributions will be given to the Manna food bank.

There will be an Affordable Housing Summit Conference on May 3rd, at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference center. County Executive **Ike Leggett** and HUD Deputy Director **Ron Sims** will make presentations.

On June 10th CSS will coordinate with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to sponsor a Live Near Your Work / Telework symposium for employers. The purpose is to highlight programs that promote living near work and the advantages of telework. **Rick Nelson**, Director of Housing and Community Affairs and **Steve Silverman** from the Department of Economic Development will be speakers.

Mr. Farley thanked the committee for their work on the Jennifer and Western left turn sign change.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting date: April 13, 2010